

**Northampton CAAB Ascertainment Public Hearing**  
**June 14, 2005**  
**DRAFT Comments (Awaiting Formal Transcript)**

CAAB Members Present: Leigh Bailey, Chair; Bill Dwight, Emikan Sudan, Robin Coolbeth, Teri Morris.

Also Present: Teri Anderson, CAAB staff; Jim McKeever CAAB advisor in audience; and Steve Fitzgibbons, Comcast; and stenographer.

CAAB Chair, Leigh Bailey introductory remarks and welcome. Board members introduced themselves. Leigh Bailey read legal notice into the record. See attached.

Lucy Hartry, Tapestry Health – Read letter into the record. See attached. Access TV should further enhance community programming on behalf of City. Tapestry has limited funds for outreach and public education. Tapestry would welcome opportunity to work with access TV on public serve announcements and to be trained to use equipment to pass along service information.

Vanessa Oquendo, City MIS Director – The co-axial/fiber hybrid system is does not meet capacity needs. Expansion of City system is prevented by current system capacity. Other communities are 100 times faster. We could use access channel for webcasting of meetings. See letter.

Leslie Fraidstern – Feel empowered in negotiations. Be strong. Existing contract and cable service is dreadful. Studio is down to one staff person and little programming. Need a monitoring mechanism. Need not restrict ourselves to Comcast.

Donna Park - Patients at Hampshire Care receive basic cable service free of charge until three months ago. Disappointed that Comcast is charging elderly ill citizens for their primary connection to the outside world.

Tom Adams – Part of Montague contract process and S. Hadley studio manager offers his experience to the CAAB.

Gloria Tuperkeizsis – Producer since 1986. Studio access or use of equipment has not been a problem for her. Location is not a problem. Concerned if studio is moved to High School access would be limited or users would pay for janitor access to building, daytime students may prevent public access. Good to have a video library.

Patricia Williams, on behalf of Tobin Manor residents and senior citizens – High prices a concern for seniors. Two price increases this year. For the homebound, cable is the only way to see the outside world but they can't afford beyond the basic service. Please have program packages as options. Other towns have cut rates for seniors and disabled too. Need to have more variety in programming. Who do we talk to about changing the programming? Need more wholesome shows for kids and move the violent shows out of prime time.

Jane Guyette – Do not eliminate the polka shows.

Henry Kowalski – Council on Aging and seniors want cut rates for seniors. Holyoke has this. It should be in the Comcast contract. He likes the polka programming. Consider other cable companies.

Celia Lang – She lives/works downtown. There was lots of support for access TV in the 80's under Continental Cable. Now access to equipment is very difficult, studio is too small to do proper video. She is very discouraged. Cameras don't synch with each other. Knowledge of training/staff support is not there. The public doesn't know their rights. Programs look the same as ten years ago. Still working with the basics here – nothing has advanced. Look at other contracts to compare. Bradford St. location is ok, but need a car to get there. Access in a school has other issues – limited access and day and night? Wants more basic programming. 10-20 years ago there was lots of staff at studio – now there is no support. Shouldn't have to pay extra for CSPAN. Negotiate for additional cable programming for political coverage at federal level. Need at a minimum three cameras that synch, basic equipment upgrades.

Russ Newman – Free Press Campaign Director. All info. will use the same pipes over next few years and there will be new national policies for telecommunications. A new view of access and adequate funding is needed for non-profit organization to run the studio. Ask for a chunk of bandwidth not just one channel – up to 10% of network capacity for growth needs. Need a community media center like in Grand Rapids, not just access tv studio – should provide audio and video and be menu driven. Request front/top position on menu for access channels. Allow for technology changes and upgrades. Ten year contract too long, five years is recommended.

Amanda Contrada, Youth Commission – High School plan for studio would have separate access and entrance. Issue now is only one part-time staff person with erratic hours, hard to reach. Need more staff in office. Students working with cable channel would be committed and interested in internships and producing shows by high school students. Studio and access to equipment would help.

Mari Gottdiener – Currently there is unfilled time on Ch. 15. She signed up for the last available training two years ago. Two hours and put together a show but with lots of frustration and difficulty due to setup. Taught herself how to do digital editing – no training and the manuals are useless – they didn't coincide with the computers. Staff difficult to contact and they deleted a file from the computer and she had to redo the program. Need committed staff, comprehensive training program to get rich programming. Better/updated and more equipment is needed. Religious programming on Ch. 15 is inappropriate. Also, can't do political advocacy – should standards should apply to religious shows.

Stevie Converse – Researched and canvassed on Saturday and did a public survey. See attached. No public information meetings to help the public formulate a helpful response. Wants information about CAAB members and research undertaken by the Board. Questions:

1. What are the MCTV rules and policies. She requested and Comcast never called back. Where is the website for the studio? All rules should be easily accessible online and in hard copy.
2. Status of \$150,000 of editing suites and line call-in? Amherst has annual appropriation for equipment upgrades. Comcast should pay for upgrades. Negotiate for 5% plus lump sums annually.
3. Training is insufficient. Must be specific times and at least twice per year.
4. Equal political candidate access – wants to see debates but no infomercials.
5. don't agree that studio should be in the school.
6. Need funding for equipment, programming, training. Negotiate hard.

Clodagh Kosior – Shocked at existing contract and simplicity. Be more precise. Tried to get training but couldn't find the studio telephone number or website. Left a comprehensive message 9 months ago – never received a response. Comcast is using public land for profit. Not a simple negotiation. Need to get something in return. Studio must be moved. It is inaccessible. High School is a hot spot – could be issues. Needs a separate entrance and bathroom. Negotiate for control of media creation – not just one channel. Need a percent of bandwidth with new technology so we escalate as network grows technologically. Ten year contract is too long. CAAB should be proactive and get an amazing community access station. Recommend the Mayor look at the most robust contract models and base it on that. Monitoring is critical. We are an innovative City. Link up with other Towns to share resources/research.

Barbara Goldin – Political speed should be allowed on Ch. 15. Needs assessment and performance audit is critical. Well publicized meetings. Easthampton has regular training courses. She has never seen Northampton trainings advertised. Ch. 15 is often a blank screen. Need a website and programming on it. Need program guides/schedules. Less than ten year contract and flexibility for technological changes. Need menu access for digital age. CSPAN should be on basic package. Want more public hearings.

Chris Kennedy – Training/production management must facilitate access that reflects the community. Should be more than twice/year. Favors a ten year contract due to FCC rulings and concern for treatment of cable over long-term as a common carrier and possibility of changes to provide community access. Contract must be met regardless of lessening in federal standards.

Darien Gardner – Studio previously had two full-time and one part-time staff. Now only one part-time staff. Need two full-time again. Ten year contract is too long – needs a frequent and thorough review. Amherst contract allows copying onto VHS tape. Insert a digital clause?

Ed Hagelstein – Need a program guide posted in paper and on web. Need sound protection from commercials. Need a program package between the basic and the \$57 on demand. Price structure should be revised to get just HBO without all the other programming at a reduced rate.

Russ Sienkiewicz, Police Chief Representing Police, Fire and Dispatch.

1. City needs a reliable and high capacity I-Net system – must supply a robust, effective, reliable system for internet access – this is a mandated need in public safety and for

homeland security. Should return this as a freebee in exchange for use of public land. Police pay for two T-1 lines because I-Net is inadequate – it is expensive.

2. Technology has changed over ten years – look at periodic reviews for technology improvements.
3. Access TV has degraded over the years – we used to have a police and fire information on Ch. 15. Must have a well involved and well staffed access tv studio to do community information outreach.
4. Studio at the high school could be a security concern. Needs limited access to the school to protect children. In 70's there was a public school channel which was a strong influence and experience for students. Request Comcast to provide for student programming.

David Murphy – Involved in Cable TV in early years and negotiated the early contracts. Franchise is a business. Negotiate carefully on a ten year contract to get better benefits. Look for staff time, technology, training, access availability. Took studio out of the high school – don't encourage putting it back. Need better access and get students involved. Cable companies are a revenue source for the City. Need a monitoring committee.

Sally Greenhouse – Would love CSPAN to be on cable. Feff answers her phone calls. Look at Sommerville studio as a model. Current studio location is fine – quiet and off the beaten path. Equipment is becoming obsolete. Need a scanner. Only two editing rooms. Facility is ridiculous compared to Amherst and Nantucket. Studio is understaffed. Don't move to high school. Form a task force to do outreach to community – need more staff to do this. File deletion happens a lot – need state of the art equipment with paid instructors. Priority is larger facility, staff, outreach.

Diane Welter – Wants a more accessible studio location. Investigate pros/cons of high school. It is on a bus route, accessible. Similar to public using the middle school pool. Need 2-3 staff and increased funding to support staff and programming. It is becoming easier to use home equipment to produce and use studio to edit. CSPAN should be part of basic cable. Use Boston PBS not Hartford. Wants to know more how programming is determined, selected. How to submit additional comments to CAAB? How does public learn about negotiations over time and how can they help? Hold a call in show on Ch. 15 for those who can't get out.

Chair announced written comments will be accepted through June 30<sup>th</sup> care of the Mayor's Office.

Steve Frank, Technology Consultant – Access is more about video over the internet now and not as much about TV. Could be a value to Northampton in attracting business. Technology is changing rapidly. Negotiate for more fundamental services at price sensitive levels. Need business services – advanced services. Comcast has decreased phone service. City should foster competition. Cable can help those businesses who cannot get DSL. Public access is all about bandwidth – negotiate for a percentage and the latest services. Need free wireless. Video on demand and internet streaming. Distribution is more important as people work at home. Allow for upgrades over the contract term. The more subscribers, the more the City should get – revenue sharing.

Joan Barberich – Will submit a letter. Need: Percent of bandwidth that increases with revenues, Access TV with front and center menu placement, free wireless access, shorter contract, use most robust model and do better, search for allies with neighboring communities, populate the board with experts.

Kathleen Horton – When she was an intern at the studio, there was a full staff in place. This is crucial. She has managed several studios and had three staff people. Impossible to do outreach without staff. Shocked at current studio – it is a ghost of what it was. Need community support for programs and staff intern support for production.

Glafyra Ennis-Yentsch – Did exercise program for Y many years ago – stopped because Media One wanted sponsors. See Alliance for community media. Bill Thompson Malden CATV. Full 5% access fee and broadband. Multiple channels – at least four. Provide health related programs for housebound. Need to fully equip the studio including a satellite for remote sites. Easthampton studio at middle school has been a problem but High School is good. Fee for janitor is a problem. Look at getting CSPAN, State House coverage. Use public videos on cable. Channel locations not at end of dial. New equipment – video messaging, photo advertising screens, local information... I loop connect all new buildings and downtown free internet. Free access tv for elderly housing. Look at gross revenues and number of subscribers. Website development. Put program schedule in invoices. Hire a consultant. DTE can be helpful. Get detailed asset statement from Comcast.

Fanny Chelmsford – Imperative to have studio completely staffed. Contract percent should grow as we grow. Studio/TV channels accessible to disabled and special rates.

Robin Barber – High School video teacher – Important to have skilled staff. 160 students in video program in one year – tremendous student interest – tap this enthusiasm. Kids need expert guidance.

Bill Dwight read letter into public record.

Public suggests the show be rebroadcast.

Notes prepared by:

Teri Anderson,  
Mayor's Office